

# Civic Center Area & Gateway Corridor



Opportunities & Strategies

September 2002  
Manchester Planning & Community Development

# GatewayCorridor

Development Opportunities in the Gateway to Manchester, New Hampshire

## 1 I-293 Interchange

The State of NH is proposing to complete the interchange of I-293 and Granite Street. This will allow access from Granite Street northbound and southbound access to Granite Street.

## 2 Granite Street

Recognizing the additional traffic from the completed exit ramp, the City is planning improvements to Granite Street. In addition to improving traffic flows, the project will create a Gateway image to the City and provide for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

## 3 Commons District

One of the three main redevelopment areas adjacent to the Civic Center, the Commons District offers opportunities for a hotel and for housing along Veterans Park - the former Merrimack Common.

## 4 Gaslight District

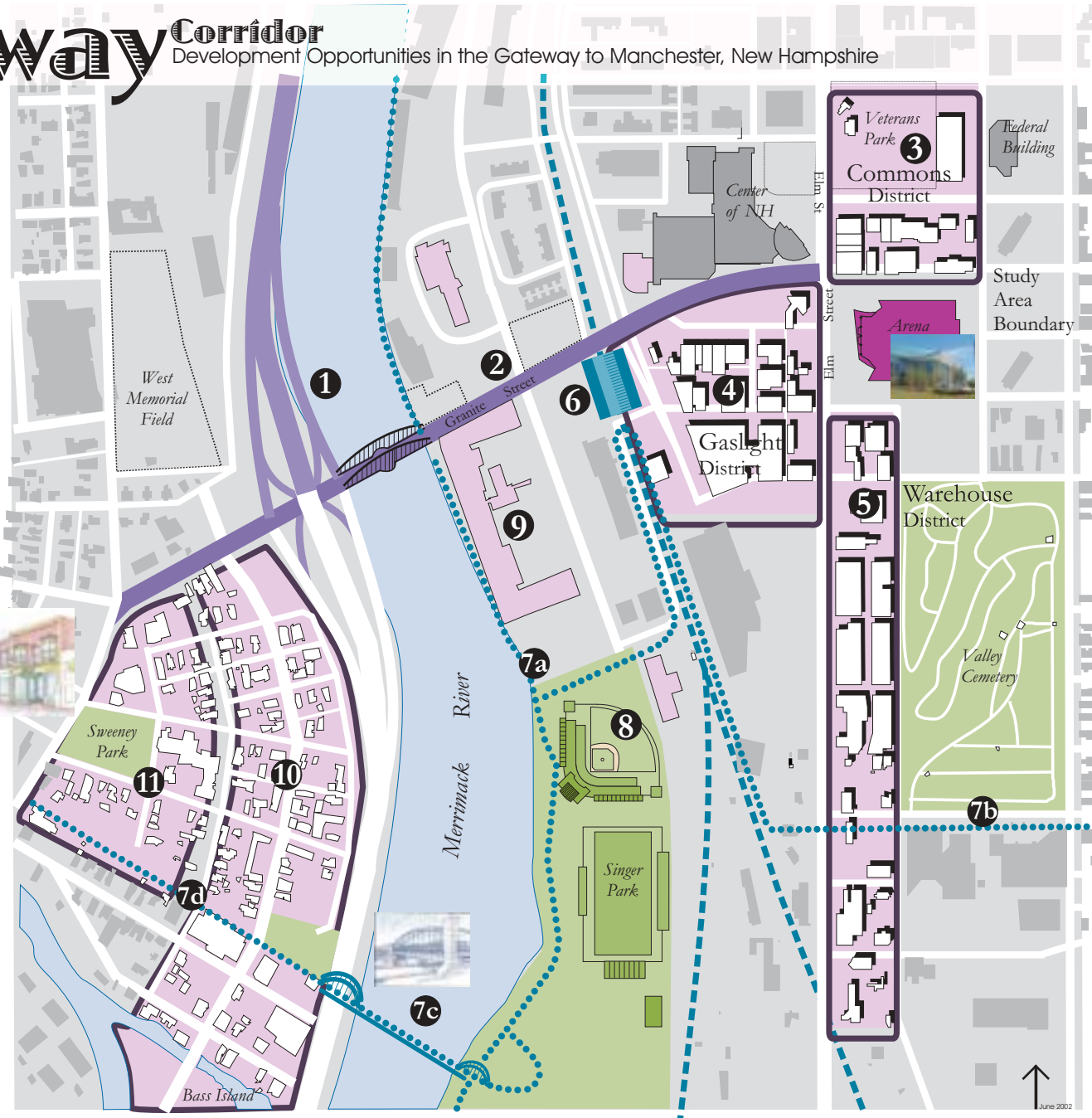
A number of historic commercial buildings sets this area up for a gaslight district that could offer entertainment, small shops and restaurants and a unique ambiance in an area strategically located between the arena and future transportation hub.

## 5 Warehouse District

This former warehouse area offers one of the best downtown locations for the new urban retail stores that are becoming popular in other cities. A central pedestrian spine using the old cobblestone way offers a great connector to the arena.

## 6 Rail Hub

The potential for a future rail stop from Boston also opens the possibility of a multi-modal transportation center bringing together rail, a connection to the airport, city buses and intercity buses.



## Trail System 7

A future trail system will link many of Manchester's neighborhoods to the downtown & beyond the City. The Riverwalk (a) is part of the Heritage Trail which will extend from Massachusetts to the Canadian border. The Rockingham trail (b) will be able to be connected which extends to the seacoast. The Hands Across the Merrimack Bridge (c) will be a major trail connector across the river. The Piscataquog trail (d) is now being developed & will extend into Goffstown.

## Stadium 8



A minor league baseball stadium is being considered for the waterfront.

## Other Development Sites 9

Outside of specific redevelopment areas, there are buildings or sites which have potential for further development.

## Second Street 10

With growth in the Civic Center area, additional access from the new interchange, and a second highway access at Queen City Avenue; this section of Second Street will be positioned for new development. Potential existing for new mixed uses with an emphasis on housing.

## Sweeney Park Area 11

This neighborhood has the potential for improvement through renovation of existing properties.

## Signage Package 12

With the City becoming a destination for various activities, comprehensive and attractive signage becomes important.

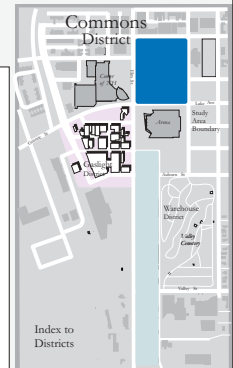
## Description

The block bounded by Elm Street, Lake Avenue, Chestnut Street and Central Street offers new opportunities for development given the resurgence of the downtown, the successful opening of the Verizon Wireless Arena, and the potential for improved access via Granite Street.

Surrounded on the north by Veterans Park and the downtown core, residential on the east, the Arena on the south and the Center of New Hampshire to the west, this location becomes an important crossroad in the south side of the downtown.

While a number of options exist for this area, one of the possible scenarios would include the following.

- ◆ An urban housing complex facing Veterans Park
- ◆ New hotel on Lake Avenue extending over pedestrian alley. Retail on first floor
- ◆ Opportunity for new office building at the corner of Elm and Central Streets
- ◆ Retail/Restaurant frontage on Elm Street
- ◆ Current Collectors Heaven building would be the only existing building to remain
- ◆ A parking deck over surface parking would provide approximately 250 spaces near Chestnut Street





## Create a Dramatic Landmark

- ◆ Create a key visual focus with a landmark building as you approach via Granite Street
  - The building should be large enough to balance the Center of New Hampshire and the Arena
  - The site should exude a sense of activity - bright and open



## Habitat

- ◆ Capitalize on the current high demand for downtown housing with residential units on Central Street
  - Veterans Park makes a great setting for housing with strong visual appeal on a redeveloped Central Street
  - With both a hotel and housing on the block, it becomes a 24 hour activity zone in the City





## Pedestrian Focus and Design Quality

- ◆ Make this a pedestrian friendly zone
  - Most of the site should be built up to the sidewalk; while residential properties may be set back ten feet with green space
  - Storefronts should be encouraged on Elm Street and a portion of Lake Avenue
  - Keeping the pedestrian alley between Lake and Central will allow views between the Arena and Veterans Park
- ◆ Include a design review process to ensure enhanced design
- ◆ Select street furniture that perpetuates a unifying theme with other sections of the Arena area



## Parking

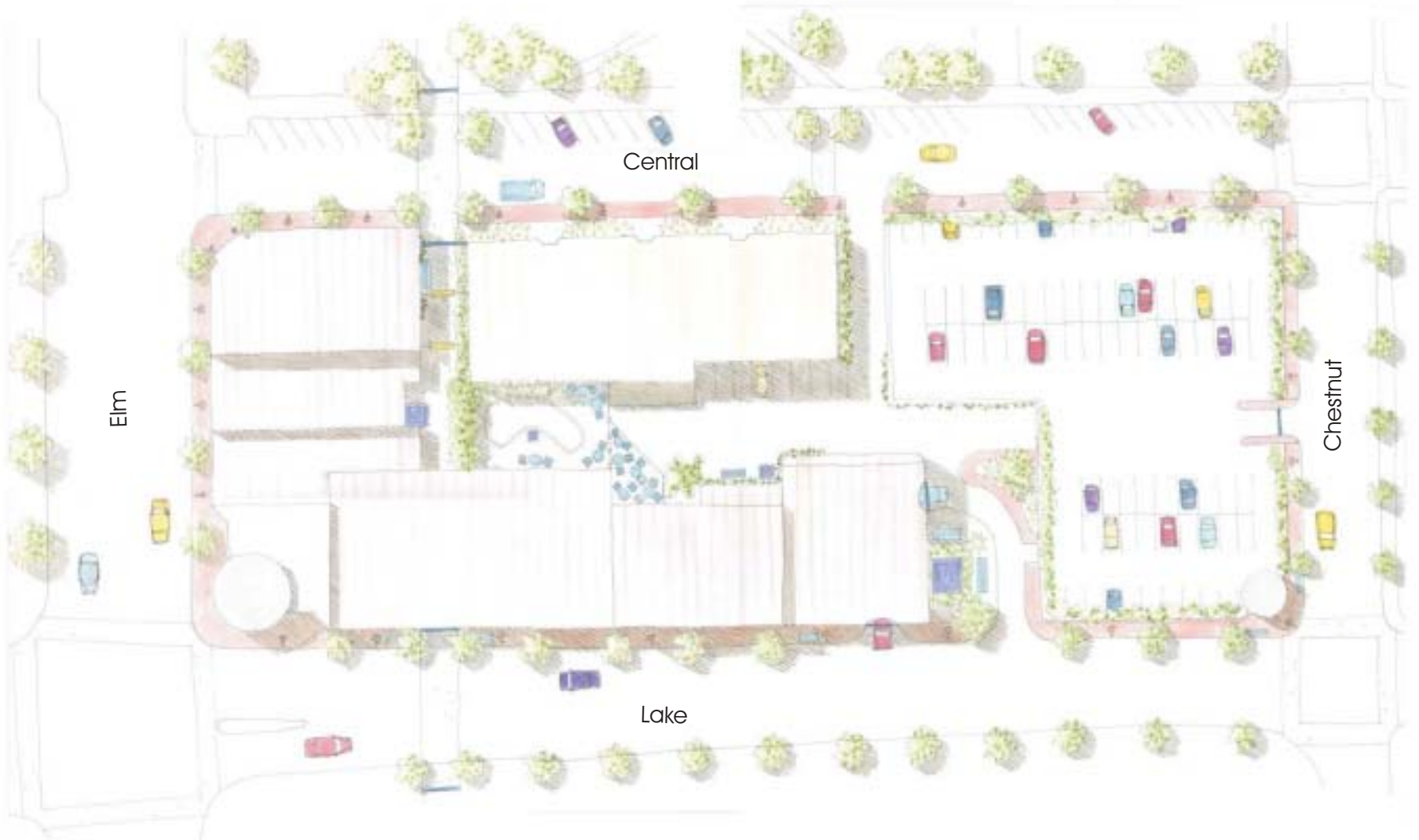
- ◆ Keep parking simple. The grade will allow two parking decks along the eastern end of the block that are more efficient and less costly than a full garage
- ◆ Provide enough parking for uses on the block but not for off-site uses
- ◆ Focus street parking on Chestnut Street side of the block
- ◆ Ensure architectural detailing of parking decks along Lake Avenue in order to provide quality image adjacent to the Arena



## New Uses

- ◆ Make this a mixed-use block
- ◆ Encourage new hotel to complement the Arena and the Center of New Hampshire
- ◆ Provide Class A office space on the upper levels of Elm Street with a potential for a new building at the corner of Elm and Central Streets
- ◆ Introduce housing opportunity in a tight market
- ◆ Consider the potential for sport focused retail in this area
- ◆ Look for a 'destination' restaurant on the corner of Elm Street and Lake Avenue, such as an 'Interactive Food Experience' that will be a center of activity





Scale: 1"=40'



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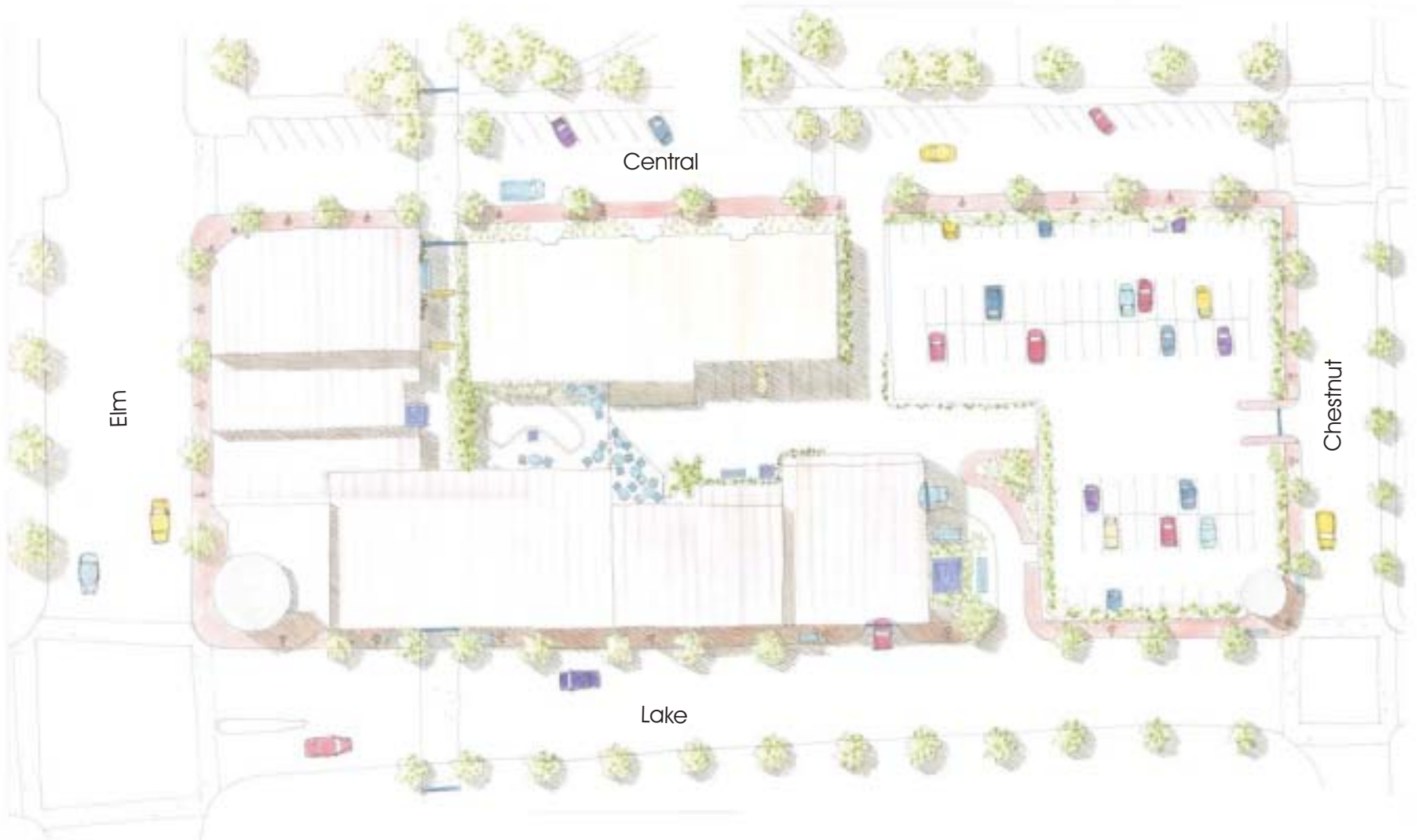
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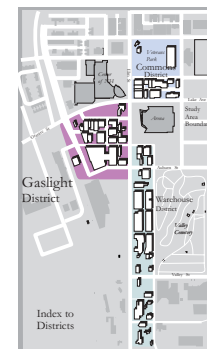
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## Description

The Gaslight District contains many examples of fine turn of the century commercial buildings that would offer a historic setting for restaurants, shops and entertainment. This area runs from Elm Street on the east, to the railroad tracks on the west and Granite Street on the north and West Auburn Street on the south.

Buildings on Old Granite Street and Elm Street offer opportunities for restaurants and specialty retail while buildings inside the district could become a gaslight entertainment area. This mixed use area could also accommodate housing on upper stories with parking on the periphery.





### Improve the Entrance

- ◆ Allow visibility of the Arena from Granite Street
- ◆ Provide additional green space/gardens in the entrance area
- ◆ In the future, provide a landmark structure at the entrance point
- ◆ Place arches at key entrance points into the Gaslight District



### Improve the Visual Appeal & Design

- ◆ No new billboards in the study area
- ◆ Provide a location for public art
- ◆ Remove overhead wires from the study area
- ◆ Provide quality & consistent street furniture
- ◆ Include a design review process





### Make Area Pedestrian Friendly

- ◆ No widening of Granite Street east of Canal Street
- ◆ Easier pedestrian crossing of Elm Street into the district
- ◆ Provide quality pedestrian way-finding signs
- ◆ Significantly improve the sidewalks in the study area.



### Parking

- ◆ Provide only “strategic” parking within the district
- ◆ Maximize parking on periphery of study area





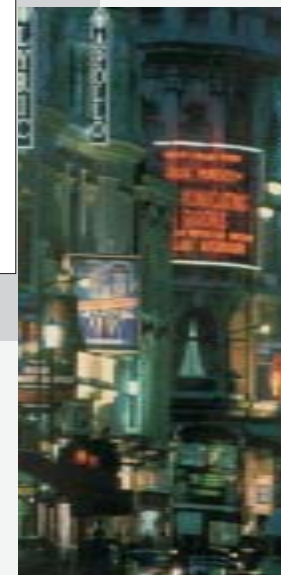
### New Uses & Things To Do

- ◆ Possible future demand for a movie theater
- ◆ Possible entertainment ride or experience
- ◆ Possible historic hotel
- ◆ Possible housing in upper stories



### Provide a Central Area for Nightlife

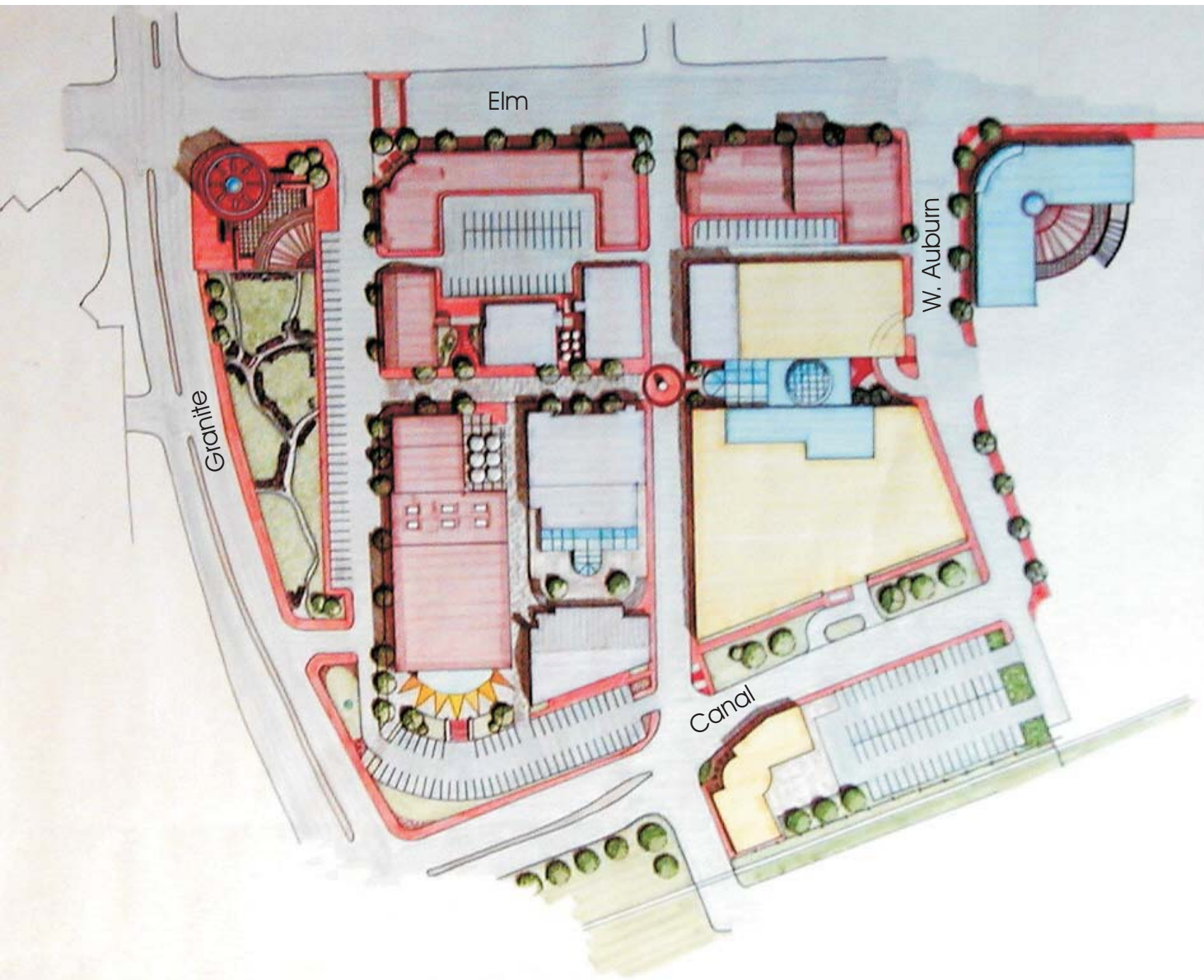
- ◆ Locate within the core of the Gaslight District
- ◆ Additional restaurants
- ◆ Micro-brewery
- ◆ Possible comedy club
- ◆ New piano bar and jazz clubs



### Retail Shops and Specialty Restaurants

- ◆ Old Granite Street storefronts have character and are suitable for rehabilitation



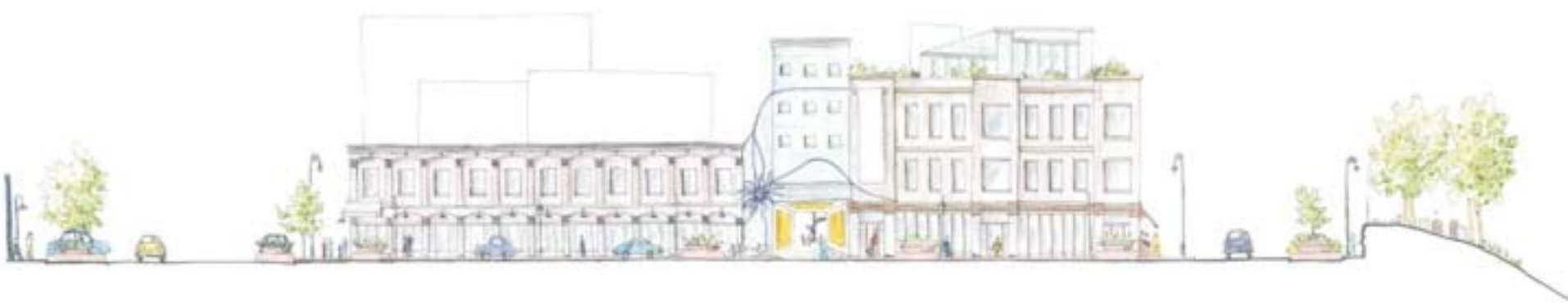


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## Description

The warehouse District offers a unique opportunity in Manchester to bring back urban retailers. The district extends from Elm Street to Willow Street, and from Depot Street on the north to the rail line on the south. General space layout in this area would accommodate larger urban retail stores that are making a comeback in many cities. These larger stores could be anchors that also support smaller local retailers. A pedestrian spine could be created along an old alley that would make this area pedestrian friendly and serve as a connection from the Civic Center to all points in this district.





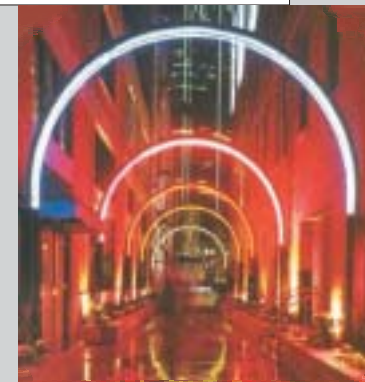
## Set Quality Design Standards

- ◆ Incorporate Amoskeag arches and lamp posts as unifying elements
- ◆ Expose existing cobble stone ways
- ◆ Incorporate universal accessibility into the design
- ◆ Coordinate street furniture, street art, signage and lighting in travelways
- ◆ Provide pocket gardens, alcoves and sitting spaces



## Preserve the Historical & Environmental Integrity of the Area

- ◆ Recognize Valley Cemetery as a complementary green space
- ◆ Encourage adaptive re-use of existing buildings
- ◆ Respect area's historic context
- ◆ Preserve views to the West Side and Valley Cemetery





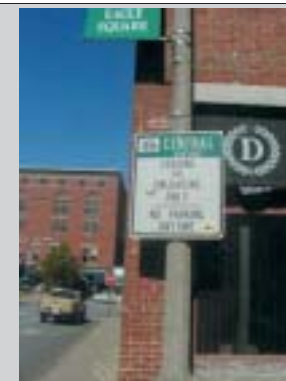
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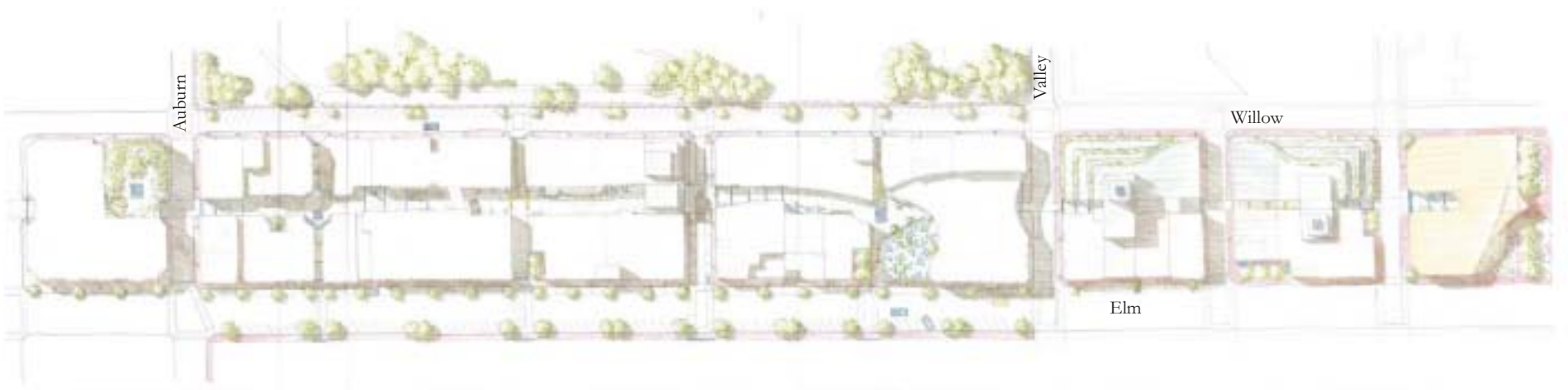
- ◆ Transform the existing warehouse alleyway to pedestrian-shopping corridor
- ◆ Form the alley into a link from Civic Center to a Southern Anchor
- ◆ Provide quality way-finding signs and landmarks
- ◆ Minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflict
  - Design parking areas for pedestrian movement
  - Encourage perimeter parking
  - Introduce amenities to sidewalk spaces
  - Design safe and convenient intersections balancing pedestrian and auto movements



### Proposed Uses & Things To Do

- ◆ Bring back major downtown shopping experience
- ◆ Adapt space for artists' studios and classes
- ◆ Locate a new cinema complex and parking facility as the Southern Anchor
- ◆ Create a central gathering space
- ◆ Promote an attraction in the area such as a Segway obstacle course or a children's museum
- ◆ Offer housing in upper stories particularly along Willow Street





Scale: 1"=40'